

CAECILIA.

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An die Abonnenten!

Mit vielem Bedauern muss ich den werten Lesern der "Caecilia" die Nachricht zukommen lassen, dass mein lieber Vater sich zur Zeit schwer erkrankt im hiesigen St. Joseph's Hospital befindet.

Die "Caecilia" wird wie gewöhnlich weiter geführt. Bitte alle Korrespondenzen wie bis jetzt an den Namen meines Vaters zu richten, jedoch über der neuen Adresse: 847 Island Ave., Milwaukee, Wis.

Um Ihr Gebet für eine baldige Besserung wird gebittet.

Otto A. Singenberger.

"Up-To-Date" Music.

All musicians interviewed by a popular English weekly answered the query "What's wrong with music?" by agreeing that the leading characteristic of modern music is its essentially "experimental" nature. Thus writes Hugh Arthur Scott in the February issue of "The Nineteenth Century" magazine (London). Sir Thomas Beecham, certainly not suspected of reactionary leanings in music, said: "I do not think that ever in the history of music was there so little good music being written and so much bad music. In the last two or three hundred years, we have never yet struck such a rotten patch." Indeed, there is a general agreement as to the unsatisfying character of so much that is produced by modern composers. Modern music is experimental and adventurous. By-paths, though often fascinating in themselves, have none the less a surprising way of ending in nothing at all. The same thing is found in all countries, turn whithersoever you like. In all countries, the more "advanced" composers are writing music which is not merely "caviare to the general" but more often than not completely incomprehensible even to the most accomplished musicians of the day,—music which not only sounds hideous to the ear, but which the most profound students and most learned theorists find it impossible even to begin to reconcile with any of the principles upon which European music has hitherto been con-

structed. The effect produced is positively comic at times by reason of the elaborate pains seemingly taken by the composer to avoid any combination of notes which could conceivably afford any pleasure to the ordinary ear. Certainly if such collocations of tones as make up some of these compositions constitute music, then it is open to anyone to become a composer forthwith. As the late Sir Hubert Parry once put it, modern composers of a certain school seem to be writing deliberately, not for the present day, but for the generation after next. But the mischief is that they persist none the less in inflicting the product on their contemporaries.

This is a period of deliberate and self-conscious extravagance which is yielding such astonishing results. The term "self-conscious" is used advisedly, for it precisely expresses wherein it is that most of this "advanced" music of today differs so fundamentally from that of the old masters. This is an age of "stunts" and self-advertisement, and musicians are no more free from its influence than the workers in any other field. To attract attention at all costs, to secure notoriety, to be talked about and discussed,—these are the motives everywhere operating nowadays. But these are results which, in the case of music, can only be attained with the greatest difficulty if one keeps to the accepted ways. To do anything great in music on established lines requires indeed nothing less than a genius. A really inspired master can do it, as Brahms proved in the last generation, and as Elgar has shown again in this; but it is quite beyond the capacity of the smaller men. Write nonsense, however, and be extravagant, preposterous, outrageous, and you will attract attention at once. Here, therefore, is the temptation, and—too many are succumbing to it at the present time. Hence, some of the monstrous and impossible productions which we are asked to accept nowadays, not only in music, be it noted, but also in pictorial art; for the efforts of the atonalists and the polytonalists, and the rest, are precisely paralleled by those of the post-impressionists, the cubists, and the like.

Composers occupy themselves in thinking out new stunts and sensations instead of setting down in single-minded and unaffected fashion the spontaneous promptings of genuine inspiration. Of Busoni, for instance, it was said the other day that he spends half of his time in laborious investigation of technical and theoretical problems directed to the devising of new effects; while in another recent article, describing a visit to Stravinsky, the writer told how he found him also deep in experiments of a similar nature. How differently such practices compare with the methods of the great masters of the past. Who can imagine Mozart or Beethoven occupying their time in any such fashion? Beethoven labored strenuously enough, certainly, in working out and developing his ideas; but with him the ideas came first and the treatment of them afterwards. With your modernist master the process seems too often to be reversed. It is with the treatment and the "effects" that he appears to be primarily concerned rather than with the underlying ideas to which those effects should properly be subordinate and ancillary. It is the manner rather than the matter which seems chiefly to engage his attention, with the aim always uppermost to startle and stagger by the audacity of his procedure and the novelty of his methods.

The cry is ever, not as in the old days for "the beautiful and the true," but for the novel and the startling, the impossible and the monstrous. Hence the incessant striving after new methods and new technical devices, which is before everything the mark of modern music. Entirely new scales, the abolition of key, excruciating dissonances, "chordal" polyphony, the employment of quarter tones—these are but some of the means employed by modern composers in their feverish efforts to attain originality at all costs and to establish their claims to attention as composers who count.

Technical skill has never been higher than at the present day. The only pity is that it does not seem to be matched with a corresponding amount of genuine creative genius and that it is devoted as a consequence to such unprofitable purposes. But, then, this is, of course, no unfamiliar phenomenon in the history of aesthetics. We seem indeed at present to be going through one of those periods common to all the arts, when, for the time being and in the absence of creative genius of the highest order, technique becomes the all-absorbing preoccupation, to the exclusion of worthier and more substantial aims. So it was, it may be remembered, in

the case of music in the fifteenth century, in the time of Josquin de Près and his contemporaries, when the leading composers devoted all their energies to the construction of what could only be characterized as musical conundrums.

Again, nothing is more remarkable in the case of this ultra-modern music than the absence of anything in the nature of genuine appreciation and enthusiasm even on the part of those who profess to take it most seriously. Sheepish apologetics and labored pleas for patience and forbearance seem to be the utmost that their champions find themselves capable of rising to, as a rule. There is a profound significance in this fact, something indeed differentiating the case of these modernist masters in a very marked degree from that of their forerunners.

On the whole, therefore, music would seem to be in a pretty way at present. Never before has there been such enormous activity, never before such deplorably inadequate results. Among the most prominent composers of the younger generation there is not one of whom it can be said that he is universally accepted as unquestionably great—not one of them can be said to have won anything approaching general acceptance as an indubitably great composer worthy of being compared with the giants of the past. And this is a condition of affairs which tells its own tale.

MODERN GROPING FOR LITURGY.

New York recently witnessed several sensational attempts at manufacturing new forms of modern "religious" worship. The first of these was at the dedication of the "Church of Artists" to the religion of rhythm, which was described by a writer in *America*, as follows: "Against a setting of blazing color, a riot of scarlets, mauves, purples and greens, the founder of the new church, a young university man, proclaimed its object: 'to express devotion and worship through the technique of art and to create in the participants the mastery of creative moods.' He then proceeded to 'posture' the twenty-third Psalm, in which he was imitated by the congregation, after which, while some one played a tom-tom, a woman read a sonnet to the sun to the rhythmic swaying of the listeners, who thus sought to express the mood stirred within them by the words of the poem."

In the second case, which occurred in a Protestant church of a rather staid and conservative denomination, there was held a

service in worship of beauty. Here, the above-quoted writer tells us, there was "the unveiling of a memorial fresco which the newspapers described as the 'blue Paradise,' and which was interpreted by the rector of the church as "a primitive gesture of pure happiness, the joy in the child-heart of man." Hence the altar was banked with flowers, the church was ablaze with lights, and filled with incense, and the officiating clergyman read poems to beauty by Keats, Shelley, Spenser, Emerson and Bliss Carman. The ceremony concluded with the prayer of the Navajo Indians to beauty.

These two services are curiously and pathetically akin. For each was a striving after a liturgical form of worship, each a stammering effort to confess the unseen beauty as the creator of visible loveliness. These people who swayed and postured and these others who, amid clouds of incense, thrilled to Shelley, have been disinherited. Their forefathers barred the church doors against "the mummerly of the Mass"; they demolished the statues of the saints and the painted windows and made bonfires of the priestly vesture lest any should be led astray by the idolatrous worship which permits the senses and the emotions to perform their part in prayer. But centuries of starvation have not succeeded in stifling in their descendants an inherent instinct for ceremonial worship.

There is a lesson for Catholics in all this. What a pathetic absurdity it is for people who have been disinherited of the Catholic liturgy of their forefathers, to turn to pagan rites in order to supply their need of ceremonial worship in this twentieth century. Indeed, what an absurdity! But let us not forget, while we commiserate, that not only the utter rejection and abandonment of the Catholic liturgy, but also the arbitrary tampering with Catholic liturgy (by Catholics) generally has its nemesis of folly and absurdity. When Catholics treat the liturgy of the Church lightly, setting aside or modifying certain prescribed liturgical rites in order to carry out their subjective whims and preferences, there is no telling to what lengths of deplorable (or laughable) absurdities such attempts at innovation and substitution will lead. The experiences of the past are more than sufficient to point a warning finger at anyone's bent for "improving" on the beauty of the forms of worship prescribed by the Catholic Church.

Die Bedeutung der Musik fuer den Gottesdienst.

(Fortsetzung.)

Dabei stellt er die Frage: "Was ist lieblicher als ein Psalm?" "Er ist," so antwortet er, "das Lob Gottes und ein recht wohlklingendes Bekenntnis des Glaubens . . . Der Apostel befiehlt zwar, dass die Frauen in der Kirche schweigen sollen, aber die Psalmen singen sie sehr gut. Ist doch zum Psalmensingen jedes Alter und Geschlecht geschickt . . . Was hat man nicht für Arbeit in der Kirche, um das Volk zum Schweigen zu bringen, wenn bloss vorgelesen wird? Sobald aber der Psalm ertönt, wird gleich alles still. Wahrlich der gemeinsame gottesdienstliche (Psalmen-) Gesang ist das stärkste Band der Einheit, indem die Schar des ganzen Volkes zu einem Chor zusammentritt."

Eusebius und der hl. Chrysostomus († 407) rühmen namentlich die weite Verbreitung des Kirchengesangs. Jener vernimmt ihn überall, wo eine Kirche ist, und dieser spricht von Städten, Höfen, Klöstern, Wüsteneien und Einöden, wo David, d. h. der Kirchengesang, der zumeist aus Psalmen und Hymnen bestand, heimisch sei. Dass er dabei den eigentlichen kirchlichen Volksgesang gemeint hat, erfahren wir aus einer andern Stelle, wo er schreibt: "Vor alters kamen alle zusammen und sangen gemeinschaftlich (Psalmen), was wir heute noch tun." Und da der Heilige dem Volk wegen des hässlichen und unbescheidenen Singens einen Verweis erteilt, ermahnt er es nicht, dass es schweigen, sondern dass es geschickt und bescheiden singen soll. St. Hieronymus († 420) lobt den Glauben des römischen Volkes, das eifrig und zahlreich zu den Kirchen und Märtyrergäbern eilt, wo, wie er sagt, ihr Amen wie der Donner des Himmels widerhallt. Papst Leo I. ruft seinen Zuhörern zu: "Geliebte! Nicht zu unserer Erhebung, sondern zu Ehren des Herrn Christus haben wir Davids Psalm in harmonischer Stimme (*consona voce*) gesungen." Von dem hl. Cäsarius, Bischof von Arles († 542), wird berichtet, er habe darauf gedrungen, dass die Laien Psalmen und Hymnen singen und singend gleich den Geistlichen bald griechisch, bald lateinisch Prosen (Sequenzen) und Antiphonen vortragen sollen.

In diesen historischen Zeugnissen, die leicht vermehrt werden könnten, glauben wir, das ideale Bild der regsten und innigsten Teilnahme des Volkes am Kultus und Opferleben der Kirche gezeichnet zu haben: das Volk betete

und opferte mit dem Priester. Ein Glaube, eine Liebe, ein Gebet, ein Opfer. Und das Band, das Priester und Volk einte, war der heilige Gesang, die *Musica sacra seu divina*.

Sollte eine solche, d. h. religiöse, im Gottesdienst verwendete, liturgische oder kirchliche Musik nicht eine hervorragend sittliche und damit pädagogische Bedeutung gehabt haben? Gewiss! Das ganze christliche Altertum hat dem religiösen Gesang eine hohe Wichtigkeit beigelegt. Die Väter und Lehrer der Kirche reden auch in begeisterter Sprache von den Wirkungen des Kirchengesanges, indem sie seinen mächtigen Einfluss auf Herz und Gemüt hervorheben und einerseits zu seiner eifrigen Pflege ermuntern, andererseits gegen jede Entartung und Verweltlichung derselben eifern. Einen schönen Zug von der Kraft der Gesänge, die damals beim Gottesdienst im Gebrauch waren, bekundet beispielsweise folgende liebevolle Erzählung. Pontius, der Sohn eines angesehenen römischen Senators ging eines Morgens, seinen gewöhnlichen Studien obzuliegen. Da hörte er auf seinem Wege plötzlich aus einem Hause einen ihn wunderbar ergreifenden Gesang ertönen. Es war eine der kleinen Christengemeinden, die mit ihrem Bischof die kanonischen Tagzeiten sang. Der Jüngling blieb stehen und lauschte, eine tiefe unerklärliche Rührung ergriff ihn, Tränen strömten von seinen Augen und er rief: "O Wesen, dessen Lob jene singen, gib mir Kunde von dir!" Auf sein Klopfen und Bitten öffnete man ihm die Tür, der Jüngling erzählte dem Bischof seine Rührung und bat, ihn über jenen Gott zu unterrichten, den man in so ergreifenden Gesängen feiere. Der Bischof tat dieses mit Freuden und nach kurzer Zeit trat Pontius mit all seinen Angehörigen in die christliche Gemeinschaft ein.

Für die starke Wirkungskraft der liturgischen Musik legt auch St. Augustin in seinen "Bekenntnissen" ein Zeugnis ab. Indem er der Tage gedenkt, die er unmittelbar nach dem Empfang der hl. Taufe an der Seite des hl. Ambrosius in Mailand verlebte, schreibt er zu Gott dem Herrn redend: "Damals konnte ich nicht satt werden an der wunderbaren Süßigkeit, die ich empfand, als ich die Erhabenheit deines Ratschlusses zum Heile des Menschengeschlechtes betrachtete. Wieviel Tränen habe ich vergossen, wenn ich deinen Hymnen und Liedern lauschte, tief gerührt von den Worten die deine Kirche so lieblich sang! Jene Worte strömten in meine Ohren, durch sie drang deine Wahrheit in mein Herz, fromme Empfindungen wallten in ihm auf, meine Tränen flossen und es war mir bei ihnen selig zu Mute."

Eingehender noch als in diesen Worten finden wir die erhebende Wirksamkeit des liturgischen Gesanges charakterisiert in einer anonymen Schrift aus der Mitte des fünften Jahrhunderts. Der liturgische Gesang, heisst es da, regt die Seele an, das zu lieben und zu umfassen, was die musikalischen Weisen feiern.

(Fortsetzung folgt.)

Korrespondenz.

Chicago, April 28, 1924.

Werther Herr Singenberger!

Es wird Ihnen vielleicht von Interesse sein, unser Osterprogramm überzusehen und wenn Sie wollen dasselbe in der *Caecilia* zu veröffentlichen. Alles ging wie am Schnürchen und besonders fand die Messe von K. Pembauer, Kgl. Musikdirektor in Dresden, die beim zweiten feierlichen Hochamte gesungen wurde, guten Anklang. Ich weiss nicht ob Sie diese Messe kennen, aber sie ist recht gut. Dieselbe wurde mir von einem früheren Chormitgliede, die jetzt in Deutschland verheiratet ist, zugesandt, und da die Messe so gut war wurde sie auch gleich eingeübt. Das Programm für Ostern war folgendermassen:

Auferstehungsfeier:

Angelus Domini J. Mitterer
Seht, der Heiland steigt.
Jesus lebt.

Das erste feierliche Hochamt:

Messe, Stella Maris, op. 141, vierst. gemischter Chor . . . P. Griesbacher
Introitus Choral
Graduale H. Tappert
Sequence, op. 87, No. 4 . . . M. Haller
Offertorium K. Geierlechner
Communio, zwei Männerstimmen, Fr. Nekes

Das zweite feierliche Hochamt:

Messe in F dur, op. 10, vierst. gemischter Chor Karl Pembauer
Proprium, wie bei der ersten Messe.

Zum Segen:

O Salutaris J. Gruber
Tantum Ergo, fünfstimmig . . C. Santner
Regina coeli F. X. Witt

Hoffentlich gefällt Ihnen das obige Programm.

Zum Schlusse wünsche ich Ihnen noch nachträglich ein Fröhliches Osterfest.

Ihr

Joseph M. Schutte.
(St. Raphael's Kirche.)

